

17P347
INAUGURAL LECTURE

READ BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

IN THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

ON

THURSDAY, MARCH 17th, 1836.

BY

R. D. HAMPDEN, D. D.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY.

FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:

B. FELLOWES, LUDGATE STREET.

OXFORD: D. A. TALBOYS.

M DCCCXXXVI.

INAUGURAL LECTURE.

CALLED to fill the principal chair of theological instruction in this University, at a season of peculiar perplexity and apprehension of danger to the Church—I must confess I almost sink under the burthen and responsibility of the task which I have undertaken. I naturally feel that the purest best heart, and the clearest strongest intellect, are in themselves inadequate to the exigencies of the post—and, therefore, that however conscious I may be of rectitude of faith and zeal, however strenuously I may exert the utmost powers of learning or talent I may possess, I must still fall far short of the high temper of mind which the office exacts.

Had I then rested the question of undertaking the office simply on the answer which I could give to the inquiry, “Who is sufficient for these things,” I should not have had the presumption to present myself before you, as, on this day, commencing the arduous duties of the office by an inaugural address to the members at large of the University.

But I have reflected with myself, on the

other hand, that however mean the instrument, God may be pleased to bless it; that if I referred all my exertions to his providence and grace, with unreserved reliance on his promised aid, I might obtain a strength and a success in this holy cause, not my own, but such as he gives to the humble;—when I have reflected, I say, on this consideration, I have not thought it right to shrink from the responsibility, however painful, or to look exclusively to my own unworthiness.

Nor is it with any undue assumption to myself of the promises of divine grace and assistance set forth in Holy Scripture, that I have adopted this resolution, of taking on me this heavy burthen of duty. For the same divine word, which gives the inspiring assurance—“My grace is sufficient for thee,” tells us also that God will give his Spirit to all that ask him, that the earthiness of the vessels does not prevent his committing to them heavenly treasures; that he has on occasions chosen the “weak and foolish things of this world” to confound the wise and prudent, and amidst all their natural inefficiency, to work the designs of his providence—not bidding us look to the world’s applause and recommendation, as the criterion and sanction of our fitness for his service.

In the simple conviction then of my own sincerity of purpose, and not in the vanity of a fanatical confidence, do I solemnly profess

in the face of the University, that it is my heart's desire to serve God faithfully and devotedly in that station in his Church in which He has placed me. And I ask only to be regarded with the kind and candid feelings which such a profession honestly made, naturally invites. Further, as I fully believe there are none whose eyes are fixed on my conduct, whether here or elsewhere, who, however fearful of the result, would not rejoice in my faithful discharge of the office; so I trust I shall have your good wishes and prayers that I may acquit myself in it as a true member of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, in life and conversation blameless, in doctrine uncorrupt, rightly dividing the word of truth, and building up others on our most holy faith; to the glory of Him, who is at once our Head and our great Corner-stone, the Divine Author and Giver of our salvation.

This persuasion of a real secret co-operation in the work on the part of so many deeply interested in its success, will be a great encouragement in prosecuting it. I shall feel that I do not stand alone—that whatever I may design of real advantage to the Christian cause, will be seconded by the devout sympathy of all candid minds; and humbly trust, that, as we are told for our comfort and encouragement, “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,” the Holy Spirit

will not be wanting to bless such designs with effect.

From these prefatory observations on the spirit with which I enter on this sacred office, I proceed to give you a general outline of the basis on which my whole teaching will be founded.

Undoubtedly he who would rightly expound the truth to others, ought to be deeply and firmly rooted and grounded in that faith which he would inculcate. Personal faith, personal holiness, are clearly indispensable requisites in him who would act the part of a watchman in the towers of Zion, to go round her battlements, and to give security and peace to those within her walls.

The great foundation then that I would lay for all my teaching is no other than that on which all our Scriptural instruction is built, Jesus Christ himself, "God with us," "The Lord our Righteousness," the Divine Being condescending to take our nature upon Him, and submitting to sufferings and death on the Cross for our sins. "For other foundation," as the Apostle says, "can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Whatever either minister of the Gospel may preach, or professor of theology inculcate, it is all valueless unless it have reference to this primary "mystery of godliness." For without

it, all our thoughts of eternal life and happiness are groundless. “If Christ be not raised, our faith is vain; we are yet in our sins.” The preachings of Prophets calling to repentance would lose their spiritual force and meaning—the types and shadows of the Old Testament would want their antitype and substance—the discourses of Evangelists and Apostles would no longer sound in our ears as lively oracles of salvation—the precepts of holy living scattered through the volume of Scripture would be divested of their quickening efficacy.

It is this great truth then, received into the heart by faith as a living principle of conduct, and confessed by the mouth with the confession of the humble and contrite sinner, to which I shall direct all my exposition of Scriptural doctrine. By this standard I demand to be tried; and to the persuading, and understanding, and love, of this holy truth, I pray, that all my endeavours may successfully be directed. As it is the animating principle of the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, so would I desire that it should never be forgotten amidst all the various studies and labours of the theological student. He must in fact “draw all his studies this way.” All must tend to bow him down in lowliness of adoration and praise before the cross of his Divine Redeemer. It is the holy task of the Christian minister to bring the souls committed to his care to the true knowledge of this saving

truth. It is the prize of exertion to the theological professor, to impress the stamp of it on all his teaching; so that he may in truth, “know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him Crucified;” and you may with him “count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.” Thus may he hope to render his Lectures a *κτῆμα ἐς αἰὲν*, and not a mere display of theological erudition for the hearing of the moment, an *ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἄκουειν*.

Addressing myself to Christian hearers, Christian in the highest sense of the term, as implying the disciples of an atoning Saviour, devout believers in the proper Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, I need perhaps scarcely add, that the enunciation of this great saving truth involves in it the teaching of a vast scheme of vital doctrine for its full and proper development. To those here present, it can, I repeat, be hardly necessary to say that it is not enough for the Christian Preacher or Professor nakedly to set forth the truth that “Jesus is the Christ,” without those accompanying portions of doctrine which give to the cardinal verity its body and expression. But as I speak, not to masters in Israel only, not to the scribe well-instructed in the kingdom of God only, but to “babes in Christ also,” to those whom too general statements might mislead, and to whom it may be useful to hear “line upon line and precept upon precept,” I shall go on

to point out how the right inculcation of the doctrine of "Christ Crucified," draws along with it the exposition of a number of other revealed truths no less holy and vital from their inseparable connection with it.

How is it then, that, as children of the adoption in Christ, we are introduced within the pale of this saving truth, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners by the atoning merits of His death and sacrifice on the Cross? Evidently by our baptism in this holy Faith, by the mystic sign and seal of our regeneration, when we were consecrated to God in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. When we were thus first placed in the arms of Christ, we were brought into the holy presence of the blessed Trinity; we commenced our Christian condition as the creatures of God the Father, the redeemed of God the Son, the sanctified of God the Holy Ghost. To know Jesus, therefore, as the Christ indeed, is to know that sublime and ineffable relation in which He stands to us, as the only begotten Son of God, who was with the Father and the Holy Spirit before all worlds, and co-equal with Them in majesty, and glory, and holiness, taking upon Him our nature, stooping to the humiliation of our manhood, and so becoming a meet sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. Thus it is, that to know Christ is emphatically to know and feel that God is Love. We know and feel that

God loves us, not only because He has blessed us with life, and placed us under the mercies of His natural Providence, but because He is also the Father of Jesus Christ, and the Giver of the Spirit ; because He has created us again in His Son, and sustains our spiritual existence by personal communion with His Holy Spirit. Hence the Scripture has said : “ No man hath seen God at any time : the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” If we know Jesus Christ, we know also that revelation of God which He hath declared. We believe, in short, in the full sense in which our Church has expressed it, “ three Persons and one God,” “ a Trinity in Unity and an Unity in Trinity.”

To this sublime confession, I among others here present, have solemnly and devoutly been pledged in infancy by the fostering care of the Church, and to the same in the mature age of reflection I have as solemnly and devoutly set my hand. And I reverentially appeal to the Searcher of hearts as a witness that I have never for one moment swerved from this true faith of the Gospel, but that, the more I have inquired into Scripture,—the more conversant I have become with theological antiquity,—the more I have laboured to “ know of the doctrine whether it be of God,” by improving in doing the will of God,—the more I have been convinced that the Trinitarian doctrine professed by our Church is the true one—that it cannot be denied with-

out expunging the Scriptures themselves, and unlearning every lesson which inspired Prophets, and Evangelists, and Preachers have taught us.

In what I have ever written, or said, or thought, on theological subjects, I have constantly had this deep conviction of the sacred Truth present to my mind. Whether I have been engaged in speculative discussion, or in practical teaching, I have had in view to bring it home to the understanding, (so far as such a mystery could be brought home to the understanding,) free from glosses and misconstructions, and to the heart in all its winning persuasiveness to holiness and divine consolation. I will not pretend always to have stated my conviction in the fullest, clearest manner, so as to have avoided all possibility of misinterpretation. I will not claim to have been invariably accurate in the use of words, or to have anticipated every possible objection that could be raised against particular modes of statement. Nor again can I presume that I have always made my practical aim so distinct, and so direct to the heart, as invariably to have hit the object in view. Who is there so expert in unfolding and recommending the truth, however deeply he may have drunk of the pure fountain of the oracles of God, however learned in the stores of theology, however versed in the art of practical address and persuasion, that can boast of having guarded strictly against all

misconception? Especially, too, where a recondite track of observation is pursued, where the meaning of controversial statements is to be disentangled, and the thread of obsolete speculations and reasonings to be recovered, there will, in all probability, be an opening for misunderstanding on the part of others on whom the light of his researches falls but dimly amidst the surrounding shadows. Still if there is a real desire on the part of the teacher to inculcate the truth, (and there is no one, I trust, who will suspect me of any other desire,) there must be a natural interpretation of my words consistent with such desire, and distinct from the perverse sense which has been drawn from them. If, then, I am candidly judged by this my real intention, it will be found that in nothing have I departed from the true catholic faith of the Trinity, but that, on the contrary, I have made it my ground-plan of theological instruction throughout, the fundamental, true assumption, on which my argument proceeds in every theological discussion.

And now, as Theological Professor, can I have any other object proposed to me but to guard this sacred deposit with all fidelity and diligence! May God forbid that any thing I may say or do in the discharge of this trust, should have any other effect but to strengthen and extend the knowledge of the revelation of God through Jesus Christ—the mystery of the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and

God the Holy Ghost, one God blessed for evermore.

Accordingly, in expanding the great Gospel truth of Salvation through the blood of Christ, I shall be led to enforce also, that of our Sanctification by the Spirit. We cannot rightly believe that Jesus Christ died on the Cross for our sins, without embracing also the firm assurance, that He is with us still by His Spirit, the Holy Comforter, pleading with our hearts, preparing and assisting us in working out our salvation, and filling us with all joy and peace in believing. The Scriptures assure us that "without Him we can do nothing," that God "worketh in us both to will and to do, of his good pleasure;" that to bring forth good fruit, we must grow in Him as the branches in the vine; and that it is the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit thus to unite us to Christ, and incorporate us, as lively members, into His mystical body the Church. The sound faith in the Holy Trinity, in itself the work of the Holy Spirit, carries us to the acknowledgment of the real proper personality of the Holy Ghost. Under the influence of this faith we feel that we have One with us who is mightier than the Tempter, and the world around us, and our own sinful lusts; that we have a living Guardian and Supporter, whose eye is never off us; a Friend that will never absent Himself from us, unless we grieve Him and provoke Him by our hardness of heart to leave us desolate. For the

promise is, that He shall “ abide with us for ever.”

Now if we believe in the Atonement of a Divine Redeemer, and the Sanctification by a Divine Comforter, we cannot but be cordially disposed to receive the doctrines of Justification by Faith, of preventing and co-operating Grace, of the necessity of Repentance, and of Christian Holiness of life, of the Corruption of our Nature, and of a day of Final Retribution and Judgment. The application to the heart of the true Trinitarian doctrine entirely cuts off all human pretension, and sinks our highest merits into demerits. Under this conviction we truly say, that “ Faith without works justifieth us ;” that “ by grace we are saved, through faith ; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God ; not of works, lest any man should boast ;” God by His preventing grace putting into our hearts good desires ; by His co-operating grace enabling us to bring the same to good effect. “ Because Faith,” as our Homily expresses it, “ doth directly send us to Christ for remission of our sins, and that, by faith given us of God, we embrace the promise of God’s mercy, and of the remission of our sins, (which thing none other of our virtues or works properly doth,) therefore Scripture useth to say, that faith without works doth justify ^a.” And so again, to know that the Holy Spirit is with us, dwelling in our hearts, is to know fur-

^a Third Part of the Sermon on Salvation, p. 24.

ther, that of ourselves we have no power to turn unto God, but that His grace must come down to us and bring us to Him; that we must cast away our sins, by the same Divine grace, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, purifying ourselves even as He is pure who “dwelleth in us.”

Nor, again, do I see how he who holds rightly the Incarnation and Atonement of our Lord can look at his own nature, otherwise than in the language of the Article, as “very far gone from original righteousness,” and “corrupt,” in the strictest sense of the term. When we go back, too, to the earliest records of Scripture, and find that this Divine Expiation was provided in the counsels of the Almighty at the transgression of the first man, surely we must acknowledge, as it is simply declared in Scripture, the depth of the root of that sinfulness for which the Redeemer came to atone. It is clear, as the Scripture shews, that in Adam all die, even as in Christ all are made alive—that though there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ, still the infection of nature, the fault, and depravation, remains in every man, the flesh warring against the spirit continually, and weighing down and impeding the immortal principle within us.

In close connection with the leading truths to which I have referred, follows the doctrine of the Sacraments. I have spoken already of Baptism, as the sign and seal of our regenera-

tion in Christ. Our Saviour has sanctified water to the mystical washing away of sin, by declaring that "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" and by an express promise, that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." We cannot doubt, therefore, the efficacy of Baptism among the means of grace. Christ's blessing has descended on it; and the use of the sacred rite, therefore, becomes indispensable to all who are within reach of it. And therefore our Church with reason speaks of the charitableness of the act of bringing children to Christ's holy baptism; and in virtue of Christ's promise regards the baptized as regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church.

Again, the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ is in like manner justly regarded by our Church as the spiritual food and sustenance of the soul. Our Church, indeed, has rejected the fond notion of Transubstantiation; but does not therefore the less hold a real vital presence of Christ in the Sacrament. The Church forbids our holding the doctrine of a corporal presence, yet does not presume to overlook the strong words of Christ declaring "this is my body," "this is my blood," and "he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him;" and will not therefore incur the impiety of emptying this holy Sacrament of its gifted treasure of

grace. And thus it is asserted in the Catechism that the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.

I have adverted to these leading topics of Christian education, by way of pointing out to what object I purpose to direct every course of theological instruction in which I may hereafter be engaged. The nature of this Lecture obliges me only to touch on them very summarily. The candour of my hearers will I trust supply omissions which the hurry and anxiety of the moment must have occasioned, and receive what I have said rather as a specimen than as a complete outline of Christian truths. To fill up the outline would take not paragraphs but volumes. Believe me only, that I have no thought to detract one iota or tittle from the whole counsel of God revealed in the Bible.

I now proceed to speak of the authorities and the course of religious study, to which my whole theological instruction will have reference.

Let me then at once state that I purpose leading my hearers to the Scriptures themselves as the sole supreme Authority of all revealed truth. When I see in the Bible itself how exclusively it reserves to itself the right of declaring the truth of God—when I find it asserting its own sufficiency and certainty in making us “wise unto salvation”—when I observe our

Lord himself citing the Scriptures of the Old Testament as decisive authorities,—his Apostles also appealing to them,—the primitive converts commended for their zeal in searching the Scriptures, — our Lord again characterising them as “testifying of” him,—St. Paul approving Timothy for having known the Scriptures from a child ;—looking to these facts and to the practice also of the early Church in all its controversies of deciding by the testimony of the written word,—I cannot admit any other authority as approaching at all to the weight and sanctity of the Evidence of Scripture. I should feel myself untrue to the great principle of Protestantism, which broke the seals of the Bible and opened wide its pages to the reading of every Christian man—I should feel myself also untrue to the teaching of the Church of England, which so strongly declares that “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation ;” and again, that “although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy writ, yet as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation”—if, I say, with these strong assertions of the paramount authority of the Bible, I should receive

any other authority as a legitimate source of divine truth, I should convict myself of deserting the cause of Protestantism and of our own Church, no less than the cause of the Bible itself.

I shall be imperatively called upon by my duty therefore in this chair of Theology to lead the student (to use the words of our Ordination service) to be diligent in prayer and in reading of the Holy Scripture; and especially to employ his mind "in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same." It will be my pride to train him to be "mighty in the Scriptures," so that he may at his command draw forth by God's blessing the waters out of these living wells, and distribute them according to the needs of the Church in seasonable streams.

But will my performance of this most sacred duty, of upholding the paramount authority of the Bible, require me to disparage the authority of the Church, and the free use of private reason in examining and judging of the truths of Revelation, and the manifold helps of human learning? Far from it. It will require me certainly to underrate the importance of these guides to the truth, as viewed in competition with the exclusive divine authority of the Scripture, not to dispense with them. If indeed the state of the Church was such at any particular period as to give apprehension that the high ground of Protestantism was at all endangered,—that there was risk of a shade being thrown

over the authority of Scripture by the exaltation of that of the Church or of private reason, or of learned exposition ; then it might be incumbent on the Christian teacher, loudly to proclaim the glad tidings of the Bible, and the Bible only, as the charter of our salvation. At all times indeed it becomes us to entertain a holy jealousy of encroachment on the supremacy of Scripture : so apt is human reason, under some form or other, to lift itself up to an usurped importance, and to derogate from the exclusive sanctity of the Divine word. We ought therefore to watch with anxious care above all things, that precious deposit of the oracles of God especially committed to our veneration and care.

Still when we are calmly reviewing the whole state of the case, we must not overlook those provisions for the right interpretation and use of Scripture which have been especially given to us. When our Saviour himself was quitting his earthly ministry, he appointed his Apostles to take up his mission, saying to them “as my Father sent me, even so send I you.” He promised further to be with his Church “always even unto the end of the world,” that his Holy Spirit should “abide” with the Church “for ever,” and “guide his Apostles into all truth.” St. Paul also distinctly characterises the Church as “the pillar and ground of the truth.” We cannot doubt therefore that the Church at large, and in particular its ministers, as the im-

mediate bearers of the Apostolical commission, are means appointed by the Scriptures themselves for the exposition of the Divine word. It is only, however, we should observe, in subordination, in humble and devout subordination, to the Divine word itself, that the Church has received its sacred commission. The word only which the Scripture puts into its mouth, can the Church utter as the word of Divine Revelation. To the Law and to the Testimony is its appeal. To the caviller and objector its only answer is, "It is written."

In this its subordinate capacity, however, the services of the Church are most important. It has to initiate and train the infant disciple in the faith, to point out to him the way in which he should walk through the wide world of Scripture truth, and impress that truth on his heart by preaching and example. It has to bear the message of salvation,—to proclaim Christ crucified,—so that the disciple may come to the living oracles in which the great Sacrifice is revealed, and say, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

On this ground it is, that the Church interposes so usefully with her Creeds, and Articles, and Homilies, and Catechism, and Liturgy, and Canons. All these are subservient, in different manners and degrees, to the edifying of the body of Christ, to the strengthening of Chris-

tians in their most holy faith, to the devout understanding and practical reception of the Divine Revelation itself. Far be it from me to lessen the reverent estimation of these monuments of early piety and ancient zeal for the truth of God. I am satisfied in my own mind that they have been of essential use for maintaining the Christian religion in its integrity, in holding together the faithful in fast communion, in keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Under this conviction, however freely I may have discussed the abstract phraseology in which they are expressed, I have said whatever I may have on any occasion said concerning the Creeds and Articles of the Church. At the same time I place them at a vast distance from the sole authentic records of the Divine Will, the Scriptures themselves. They are not, I conceive, for one moment to be brought into comparison with the claims of the Revelation itself on our reverence and love. Their value is relative to the Scriptures and derived from the Scriptures. Have they guarded and inculcated the truth as it is written? This is the question with regard to them. I fully believe that they have done so, by the watchful superintendence of Christ over his Church; and I therefore esteem them very highly for their work's sake, though they have wrought that work by the hands of fallible men, and amidst all the imperfections of human language.

It is evident, indeed, that but for the existence of an authorised ministry, we could have had no fixed canon of Scripture as we have at this day. For what has fixed that canon, but the constant uniform reception by the Church of the sacred Books which we now receive as divinely inspired. This function of the Church, as the keeper of God's Holy word, is sufficient in itself to recommend to us the authority of the Church as demanding our deference and attention. It is no light thing that to it have been committed the oracles of God. It puts the Bible into our hands. If we reverence the Bible, we must reverence also the messengers who bear it to us, for their labour of love. For only reflect on the ease and satisfaction with which we now refer to the sacred volume. As great as would be the perplexity of heart, had we not so ready a criterion of the canonicity of the sacred books to refer to as that which the standing body of the Church presents ; so great ought to be our satisfaction and gratitude now that we do possess this safe criterion.

With respect to the use of private reason in judging what is the truth of Scripture, the dispute on the subject is, in great measure, owing to the fallacious sense in which the term private reason is employed. If we understand by it the uninformed reason of every man acting independently of all counsel and aids for forming a right judgment, there can be no doubt that a private reason of this kind is not a proper

judge of religious truth. At the same time it is true in one sense, that every man's private reason must be to him the ultimate judge of what is true or false in religion as well as in other concerns. For every subject of consideration must ultimately be decided by that tribunal which each man's faculties, each man's state of mind and heart, erect within him. But more particularly in regard to religion, the duty of "searching the Scriptures" is evidently so urgent to every Christian, that every one who can read them or hear them, is clearly bound to use his best reason in examining for himself into the matter revealed. So that a truly Scriptural Church, as the Church of England, will never discourage among its members the free application of their reason to the inquiry into revealed truth. But while this is granted, let it not be assumed immediately that any kind of employment of private reason in such inquiry would be sanctioned by a scriptural Church. The very duty of avoiding undue prejudice requires of every one that he should inform himself to the utmost before he presumes to decide,—that he should seek the instruction and advice of those more instructed in Christian knowledge, more advanced in Christian perfection, than himself, and in particular of those who are his appointed spiritual guides.

Then again in searching the Scriptures, private reason must pursue the same method as in all other inquiries for ascertaining the truth.

It must compare Scripture with Scripture, things spiritual with spiritual, and so gather up the fragments of truth scattered throughout the sacred volume and put them together. This is a perfectly legitimate employment of reason. It is "a very different process from that of the speculatist who selects certain abstract notions and frames definitions, and argues from them what must be the truth of Revelation. The true Christian inquirer uses his reason to the utmost in interpreting what he reads in Scripture. He reasons, and concludes, and judges, but he does not speculate. He pursues what is called the analogy of faith, analysing and combining the passages of Scripture, and so forms a comprehensive scheme of religious truth from the Bible. Without such a process, he is the mere disciple of scattered texts, and not a truly Scriptural divine.

All these methods are but ingredients for the formation of a right judgment, and unless a person gives them a reverential attention, he has not taken proper measures for searching the Scriptures. He is like a man going to sea without chart, or compass, or rudder, to be drifted wherever the tide and wind may carry him. He is not bound indeed to follow the counsel he may receive implicitly, but he is bound to give it due attention, and after that to decide for himself. The case of the eunuch in the Acts of the Apostles reading the prophet Isaiah, is an illustration of this. "Understandest

thou what thou readest?" was the question put to him by Philip. And what was the answer, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" Philip accordingly "opened his mouth and began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus." Here then we have an excellent example of the mode of employing our reason in religious inquiries. The Scriptures are to be in the hands of the inquirer, the voice of superior human wisdom is to be heard, and the truth is thus to be drawn out of Scripture. We have at once the word of God, the teacher, and the candid private judgment, acting in concord. The order indeed in which these present themselves to the ordinary Christian is not exactly what it was to the eunuch in the Acts. To the Christian in general, the Christian teacher comes first; the parent or the friend, or the catechist, or the minister, tell him of the truths which he afterwards reads in his Bible; and his own judgment follows approving and receiving what he has learned and read. But the state of the case is substantially the same in all instances. The three elements will always be found conspiring to the formation of right belief. Nature has provided them for our instruction. Divine Grace seconds the dictates of nature and elevates them to the purpose of our spiritual edification. All this however is perfectly consistent with the absolute supremacy of Scripture as our only divine oracle of belief and duty.

What I have said of the right use of private reason may be extended to the use of theological learning, of the works of the Fathers of the Church, and of our own divines. It is almost superfluous in me to say from this place that all these are most valuable helps for attaining the truth—to the student, to the future candidate for the ministry, indispensable for the knowledge of many things with which he should be conversant. I need say less on this point now, because the duties themselves of the Chair will require me to speak at large, on different occasions, of the writings and services of those who have laboured in the field of theological literature.

I have now stated to you in general the views with which I enter on the sacred duties of this professorship; both what will be the great end of my teaching, and the method to which I shall direct the student. I have only a few remarks to make further, and shall then conclude.

That I labour under very great disadvantages in commencing the duties of my office, is known to you all; and I may well say in the words of the great Athenian statesman, *χαλεπὸν τὸ μέτριως εἰπεῖν ἐν ᾧ μόλις καὶ ἡ δόκησις τῆς ἀληθείας βεβαιοῦται· ὃ τε γὰρ ξυνειδώς καὶ εὖνους ἀκροατὴς ταχ' ἂν τι ἐνδεεστέως πρὸς ἃ βούλεται τε καὶ ἐπίσταται νομίσειε δηλοῦσθαι, ὃ τε ἄπειρος ἔστιν ἅ καὶ πλεονάζεσθαι διὰ φθόνον, εἴ τι ὑπὲρ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ*

φύσιν ἀκούοι. If the case were only that I had succeeded so able, and excellent, and popular a man as my lamented predecessor—a man who adorned the theological chair, not only with the peculiar qualifications of the Christian teacher, but with the graces and charities of the Christian pastor; I should find it almost an impossible task to reach an estimation, not to say equal to his, but approaching to that he so justly enjoyed. But this is not my only disadvantage. I come before you under a cloud of prejudice and clamour, which, however easy for the feeblest among us to raise and diffuse, it is the hardest thing in the world to remove or even diminish. For one who has examined into the ground of an objection there are at least twenty who repeat it without examination—for one, again, who can apprehend the force of an objection, there are at least twenty who never hear the answer—twenty who have not power, or leisure, or inclination to attend to, or comprehend the answer. The evil prejudice, therefore, goes on multiplying in an increasing ratio, while the means of counteraction are extremely limited. Amongst all charges too the insinuations of heterodoxy, of latitudinarianism, of scepticism, are obviously the most difficult to be removed. They are of so vague a nature that each person adapts to them the chimera of his own fears or fancies, and there is no knowing to what point to address a refutation. A refutation in fact

is impossible, of the ten thousand opinions by which so vague a charge may be interpreted.

Nothing again is easier than to detach sentences from the context and general scheme of an Author's observations, and to found on them almost any charge which an objector's own views may suggest. It is but a light task to leave out what explains, or qualifies, or restricts, the meaning of the sentences, and to give them a repulsive air by the hardness and crookedness of the sense put upon them. It is a familiar rhetorical art, *affingere vicina virtutibus vitia*, and to make an author guilty of the paralogisms of his perverse or ignorant interpreter. All this is easy enough. But when once suspicions have been scattered among the public, it is no light task to undo the delusion. The sophistry may be exposed, but the impression on the mind of many remains; all have not the power to revert to their former simplicity: their feelings have been alienated, and they hear only to disapprove and condemn.

I do not mean to impute misconstruction of an author's meaning in all instances to the fault of the person who misconstrues it. It may be often due to the ambiguity of words and forms of expression. Unless an author therefore can claim (which I am far from doing) to have in every case most scrupulously guarded his expressions, so as to render mis-

take of his sense unavoidable, candour requires him to take to himself some portion of the blame of being misunderstood. I am not therefore obstinately bent on maintaining the use of particular words, which, however unexceptionable in my own view, appear objectionable to others. Though I may think their objection in reality unfounded, yet as all writing is relative to instruction, I am quite sensible of the necessity of adapting phraseology to the apprehension of the hearers, and ready to avail myself of my experience of what is easily understood or not, in order to adopt the best mode of conveying the truth.

But there is a misconstruction of an author which is not his fault. It is the overlooking the main drift of his argument—the singling out passages for a particular purpose, perverting them to a sense not the author's, as I remarked just now—the fastening on him the consequences drawn by the objector—the giving an undue prominence to what are only subordinate parts of his argument to be understood with reference to his whole design; or if the passages be really important, attributing to them an importance which he had not in view. In these and other ways an author may be greatly misrepresented, and a sensitiveness of objection may be created against his statements, which precludes all fair and reasonable hearing of his real argument.

Such then is the nature of the difficulty,

which I have to encounter. But I appeal from an excited spirit to a spirit of soberness and candour. I demand not to be tried by the conclusions of an adverse school, but by the calm and gentle reason of men disposed to give me credit for no less love of the truth and the faith than themselves, and who will openly contend with me by argument, not by censure, and intimidation, and the array of hostile numbers. “Non tam bene cum rebus humanis agitur,” says an ancient philosopher, “ut meliora pluribus placeant: argumentum pessimi, turba est.” And a far greater than the philosopher has said: “Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.” “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.” “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” These words are my comfort. I trust He who spoke them will enable me to proceed on my way, without repining at the suffering through which He has required that I should pass, and without relaxation of spirit in His work under the painfulness of the counteraction against which it must be done. I am at all times ready to meet fair and free discussion; but to misrepresentation, and clamour, and violence, with God’s help, I will never yield. I pray God to forgive those who may have employed such weapons against me, and to turn their

hearts, and to grant them more of that mind which was in Christ Jesus. It is a great grief to me, I acknowledge, to know that there are any whose honest, though mistaken, zeal I may have offended. Such are, I trust, open to conviction and kinder feelings. I should however, unless experience had furnished ample instances of it, wonder that Christian zeal should, in any individual, have carried him to proceedings destructive of Christian charity and peace. A sense of Christian duty and the kind feelings of the heart will never, I believe, be found apart from each other, and least of all in doing "the work of the Lord." After all, however, I appear not here as a functionary of the University, or of the Church alone, but as the servant of a Master in Heaven by whose judgment I must stand or fall. For, let me say it with that humility which becomes me in applying to myself such sacred words: "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment; yea I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."

NOTE. p. 27.

My application of the term **FACT** to designate Christian Truths, has, I am sorry to find, been much misconceived. It may clear up the difficulty, to some minds, to point out to their attention the following passage of Bishop Butler's Analogy, which, as well as I can recollect, first suggested to me the use of the term.

“ This revelation, whether real or supposed, may be considered as wholly historical. For prophecy is nothing but the history of events before they come to pass ; doctrines also are matters of fact ; and precepts come under the same notion. And the general design of Scripture, which contains in it this revelation, thus considered as historical, may be said to be, to give us an account of the world, in this one single view, as God's world : by which it appears essentially distinguished from all other books, so far as I have found, except such as are copied from it. It begins with an account of God's creation of the world, in order to ascertain, and distinguish from all others, who is the object of our worship, by what he has done : in order to ascertain, who he is, concerning whose providence, commands, promises and threatenings, this sacred book, all along, treats ; the Maker and Proprietor of the world, he whose creatures we are, the God of nature : in order, likewise, to distinguish him from the idols of the nations, which are either imaginary beings, i. e. no beings at all ; or else part of that creation, the historical relation of which is here given. And St. John, not improperly, with an eye to this Mosaic account of the creation, begins his Gospel with an

account of our Saviour's pre-existence, and that *all things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made ;* agreeably to the doctrine of St. Paul, that *God created all things by Jesus Christ*. This being premised, the Scripture, taken together, seems to profess to contain a kind of an abridgment of the history of the world, in the view just now mentioned: that is, a general account of the condition of religion and its professors, during the continuance of that apostacy from God, and state of wickedness, which it everywhere supposes the world to lie in. And this account of the state of religion carries with it some brief account of the political state of things, as religion is affected by it, etc." Part II. chap. vii. p. 358, ed. 1820.

I have no wish to retain a phraseology which is not generally understood. But I think it has no real difficulty in it, to persons at least accustomed to philosophical terms. All such persons know that *fact* in philosophical language is not restricted to something *done* ; though it denotes such a thing in its primary sense ; but means in general *whatever is*. I employ the term to express the *reality* which belongs to Christian truths as they are matters of Revelation, as they exist in the Scriptures themselves, where they are not so much matters taught, or truths stated systematically, as they are matters revealed. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."—"This is a true saying and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."—"God is Love." Here are several propositions which as parts of the Scripture Revelation are realities of the kingdom of grace, or facts, as I term them ; when however they are taken out of Scripture and taught in the same, or equivalent expressions, as

parts of a system of Christian truth, they are more properly doctrines. The Christian Revelation again is matter of fact, in the primary sense of the term, because it differs from all pretensions to revelation, in having a real historical basis for its several communications of divine truth; agreeably to what has been stated by Butler in the passage above cited. These historical events on which it is founded are far from being the whole of the Revelation, but they are a substratum on which its fabric of truth is built.

I may refer to another instance in which my use of a philosophical term has been greatly misconceived. The meaning of the word **LAW**, as it expresses a general principle has, much to my surprise, entirely escaped some readers. For what but an ignorance of this use of the term could have led to an objection against speaking of the doctrine of the Atonement as a transcendent instance of a "law" of Divine Providence expressed by the term Mediation? Let any one read over attentively the fifth Chapter of the second Part of Butler's Analogy on "the Appointment of a Mediator and Redeemer," and he will see what I intend by thus speaking of the doctrine; for I have had this very chapter in my view in what I have said. It may be enough to quote the opening of the Chapter to shew this.

"There is not, I think, any thing relating to Christianity, which has been more objected against, than the Mediation of Christ, in some or other of its parts. Yet, upon thorough consideration, there seems nothing less justly liable to it. For, I. The whole analogy of nature removes all imagined presumption against the general notion of *a Mediator between God and man*. For we find all living creatures are brought into the

world, and their life in infancy is preserved, by the instrumentality of others : and every satisfaction of it, some way or other, is bestowed by the like means. So that the visible government, which God exercises over the world, is by the instrumentality and mediation of others. And how far his invisible government be or be not so, it is impossible to determine at all by reason. And the supposition that part of it is so, appears, to say the least, altogether as credible, as the contrary. There is then no sort of objection, from the light of nature, against the general notion of a mediator between God and man, considered as a doctrine of Christianity, or as an appointment in the dispensation : since we find by experience, that God does appoint Mediators, to be the instruments of good and evil to us ; the instruments of his justice and his mercy. And the objection here referred to is urged, not against Mediation in that high, eminent, and peculiar sense, in which Christ is our Mediator, but absolutely against the whole notion itself of a Mediator at all," etc.

